

November 2nd, 1939.

C155854

Dear Turnbull,

I have been considering some of the points raised in our talk about the development of an Information service. In my letter to Heeney I have indicated certain definite and constructive plans in the film field on which I am actually working; but it is clear there is a gap which ought to be filled.

at what point do those of us who are concerned in the matter get together and gear our work and our views to a common and authoritative policy?

I must say, I don't like the idea of a big Ministry of Information with large personnel, on the lines of the English one. It became, as you know, a disaster of heavy-weight officialdom - and from all accounts and observations, of inefficiency too. As far back as Munich, the British Government was warned against such a conception of the Ministry of Information and, I am afraid, the present mess was long foreseen by some of us.

The alternative method - and one which I think would admirably suit Canadian conditions and particularly Canada's need to economise on personnel - is to have a Bureau of Information which travels as light as possible. As I see it, you do not even need to have a Bureau. All you require is a small group of liason officers or Secretaries of Information - one for each medium which the Government wishes to use - with a principal secretary of Information who would report directly to the Prime Minister and convey policy decisively to the others. The idea of 'Secretaries' is important as conveying the idea of liason with high authority.

There would be a distinct advantage in not having a Minister or Director of Information, and as follows:

There would be no incentive to build a large machine, to justify Ministry or Directorate.

The authority of the P.M. would be direct.

It is simpler and more effective to have a liason staff which confines itself to relating Information media to policy, and does not get caught up with actual work within the Information media themselves.

Single individuals, working with a minimum of assistance are, if well chosen, more likely to keep their eye on the ball, see the job imaginatively and concentrate on matters of first importance.

It is good sense to let the ordinary expert machinery of the Information media go on with its work and confine the Government effort to the direction or persuasion of policy - a matter in which it is more likely to be professional.

Your Information service would therefore be something in the nature of a Flying Squad, proceeding from specific job to specific job and co-operating with people only in respect of specific jobs; but doing so with the authority of the P.M. in the background and a considered and single policy regarding the various problems involved, e.g. national unity, presentation of Canadian views to the United States, advising the British Information

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